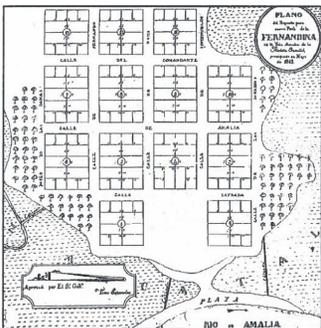


Old Town Fernandina Historic District

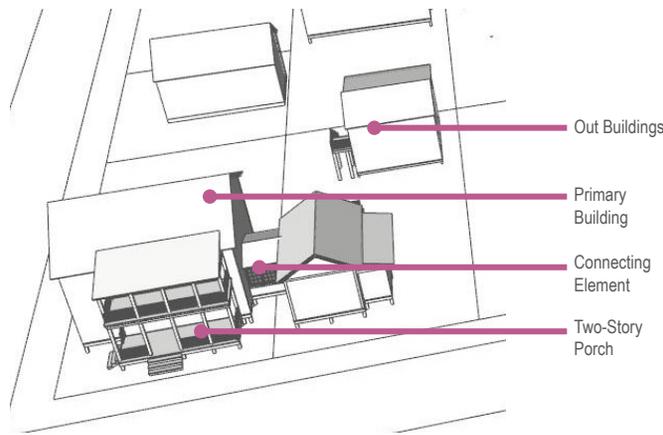
Located on the norther end of Amelia Island (north of the City of Fernandina Beach), Old Town Fernandina is a local and National Register Historic District (1990) based on its association with Spanish Colonial exploration, settlement, and community planning, and development. The orientation to the Amelia River, orthogonal grid with consistently sized blocks, and central plaza (San Carlos Plaza), among other historic urban characteristics, make Old Town a prime example of the application of the “Law of the Indies.” Established in 1573 under the rule of Phillip II, the Law of the Indies contained 148 principles governing the planning and development of a settlement addressing things like location, land use, property dimensions, public space, and social propriety.

The goal of the **District and Preservation and Development Guidelines [1999; 2017], including Preservation and Development Guidelines [revised 2021]**, is to preserve and honor the original Spanish Colonial town plat as new buildings are constructed.

At the time of its listing as a Historic District, Old Town was comprised of approximately 42 residential buildings with the majority constructed before 1940. Some 55 new residents have been constructed since the adoption of the guidelines. There are some 90 lots remaining in the District as of June 2021.



Original plan of Old Town Fernandina as platted by Spanish colonists in 1811.



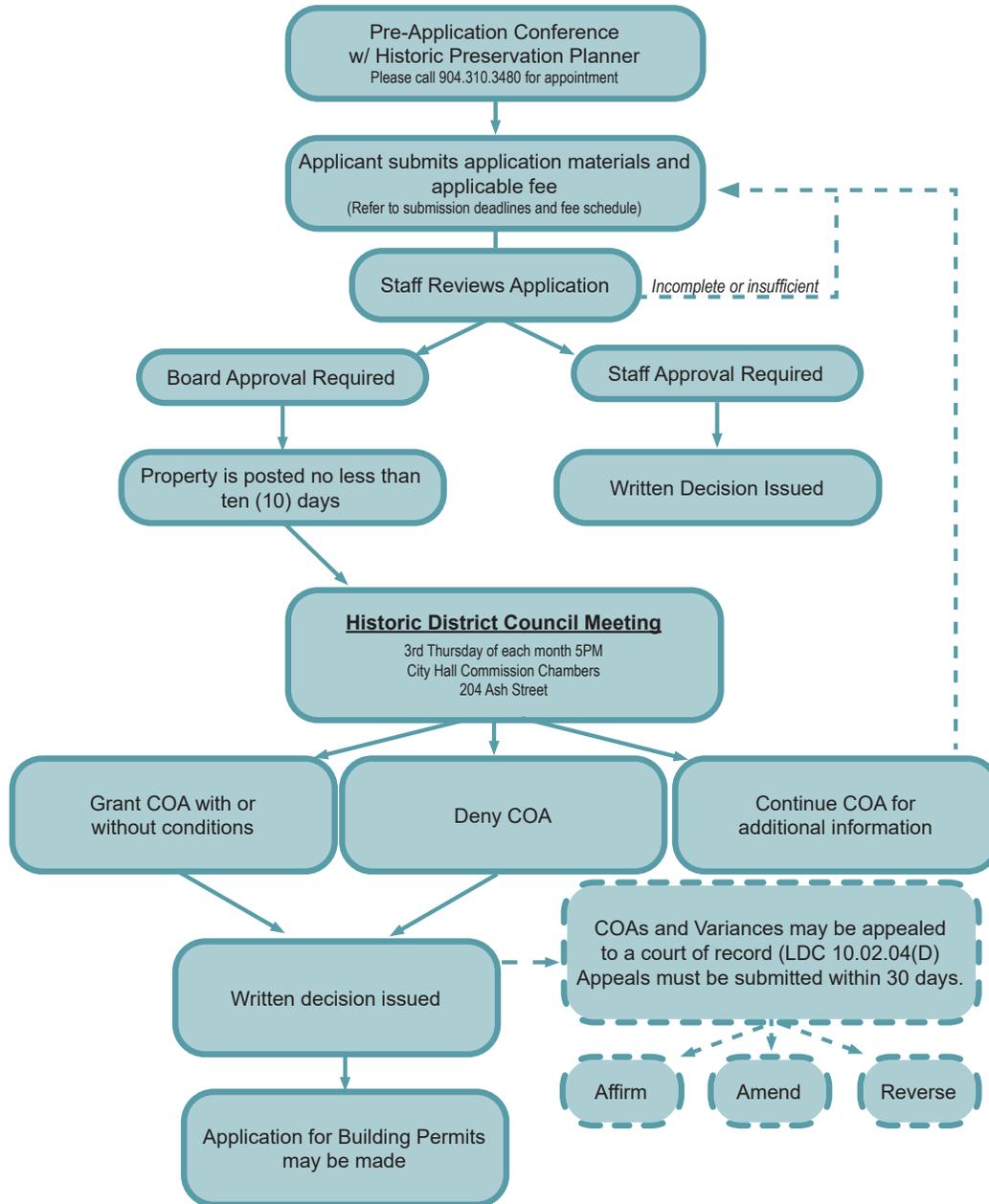
Preservation and Development Guidelines [updated 2021]

The Preservation and Development Guidelines regulate and encourage contemporary buildings that respect the original Spanish Colonial plat while allowing for architecture that is consistent, yet varied.

- The guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the Land Development Code for the City of Fernandina Beach.
- The primary building use in the District is residential with minimum, low-impact commercial allowed.
- Property owners are asked to help preserve existing trees, particularly those that are 5-inches in diameter or designated a heritage tree.
- “Visibility Corridors” (referred to as setbacks in many neighborhoods) are the primary tool for acknowledging and preserving the original Spanish plat – specifically the peonia and media peonia.
- Unlike many historic districts, there is no specific architectural style or styles that are required or regulated in Old Town. Rather there are a number of historical styles represented including: Low Country / Southeast Atlantic Coastal, Florida Vernacular, Spanish Colonial, and Modern / Contemporary.
- The architectural and urban character of the District is largely defined by the density, scale, massing, and groupings of individual buildings.
- A single residence is often made up of a Primary Building and Out Buildings which include garages, garage apartments (also known as Accessory Dwelling Units or ADU as defined by the Land Development Code), storage sheds, greenhouses, workshops, and gazebos.
- There are a variety of foundations, exterior materials and details, and roofs and chimneys found throughout the District.
- Porches, verandas, and connecting elements are common among the architecture of Old Town.
- Streets and driveways are made up of permeable materials like shell and spaced brick pavers.

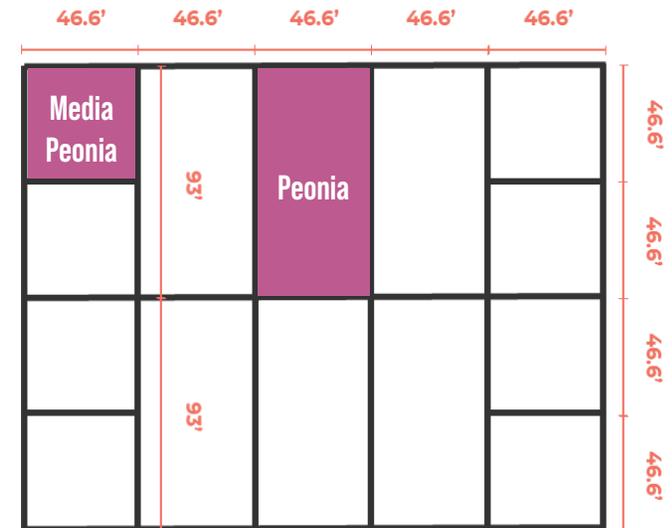


Certificate of Approval Process



Sited on a bluff above the Amelia River, the original Old Town plan consisted of some 13 blocks arranged around a Plaza at the western edge of the settlement. Each block was made up of four to six *peonias*, a basic urban lot type established by the Law of the Indies, and as many as eight *media peonias* or half lots. The size of the peonia was based in part on its use as a residential lot that provided an area for agriculture.

The Spanish used the vara (equivalent of 33-inches today) to establish the size of the peonia (46-feet, 6-inches x 93-feet) and media peonia (46-feet, 6-inches x 46-feet, 6-inches). By 1937, the original settlement had been expanded to some 20 full blocks and seven smaller blocks – all made up of peonias and media peonias. As dictated by the Law of the Indies, the Spanish plan provided for the orderly distribution of buildings based on type with civic and religious structures sited near the plaza. Most of the structures of the original settlement were primarily residential.



Typical block with peonia (original, full lots) and media peonia (original, half lots).

For more information, contact the City of Fernandina Historic Preservation Planning and visit www.fbfl.us/OT2021.